JUSTICE LEAGUE®

TASK FORCE™

STRANDED...

...IN THE WORLD OF THE WARLORD™

35 JUN 96

PRIEST
BERNADO
NAPOLITANO

THIS ISN'T LIKE SPARTACUS.

NO.

Oh, GOD-- NO--!!

NOT LIKE EXCALIBUR.

THIS *CAN'T* BE HAPPENING--!!

NOTHING AT ALL LIKE THE THREE MUSKETEERS.

GOD-- I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE--

NO, THIS IS MORE LIKE A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET--

--AND FREDDY'S WINNING.

--WANNA GO HOME--

THIS IS SKARTARIS, THE WORLD OF...

THE WARLORD

CREATED BY MIKE GRELL

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

THE SWORD OF USAF

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HEY--
HEY--!!

SSZAAACK!

--HEY, YOU CREEP--

YOU KILLED MY HORSE!!

THAT'S NOT FAIR--!!

THUMP!

HEY!!

CUT THAT OUT--!!

BLAM!!

...god...

YOU...YOU KILLED HIM...

YOU'RE WELCOME.

MANIC!!

SSZZAACKK!!

GETTING ON MY *NERVES* NOW, SON.

BLAM BLAM BLAM

I'M NOT YOUR SON.

HEY-- LADIES--

WHAM

--LET'S STAY ON THE SAME *PAGE*, OKAY?

WHAT SAY WE FIGHT THE BLOODTHIRSTY HORDE *NOW*, AND SEE WHOSE EGO IS BIGGER *LATER*.

AND RAY--J'ONN SAID *NO POWERS*. WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO ATTRACT *ATTENTION*--

--THANKS, *GAMMERON*.

CUT THE *CHATTER*, TRIUMPH--THESE FOLKS ARE ON A *MISSION* OUT HERE.

SPAT

MY POINT *EXACTLY*--

--THIS ISN'T *NEW YORK*--OR *L.A.*--OR *WHEREVER* YOU KIDS COME FROM.

THIS IS *SKARTARIS*.

THIS IS *REAL*.

THIS--

--IS THE *TRUTH*.

YOU GET ALL THAT?

HOME.

<WAKE UP.>

TUD!

<YOU'RE NOT DEAD, YOU CRUD.>

<THOSE *UNARMED PEASANT FARMERS* AT VLANDAR SHALL *NOT* BE TOUCHED. LET HIM DEPLOY HIS WIZARDS AND LOOSE HIS DEMONS.>

<I'LL SEND THEM ALL STRAIGHT TO *HELL*. AND *THEN*, MY FRIEND-->

<TELL *QUANTUM*, YOUR DOG-MASTER, THAT A FUNNY THING HAPPENED TO YOU ON YOUR WAY TO VLANDAR.>

<TELL QUANTUM *TRAVIS MORGAN* HAPPENED TO YOU.>

<--I SHALL COME FOR *YOU*.>

<FROM THIS MOMENT FORWARD I CHARGE THE LIVES OF THE VLANDAR PEASANTS TO *YOU*. I SHALL HOLD *YOU* PERSONALLY ACCOUNTABLE.>

<M-M'LORD MORGAN-->

<I'M NOT YOUR DAMNED "LORD.">

<AND, I PROMISE-->

RRIIIPP-!

<--YOU HAVE ONLY *BEGUN* TO SUFFER. NOW *BEGONE*.>

SO, TELL ME AGAIN--WHICH ONE IS THE *BAD GUY*--?

THE "*BAD GUY*" IS THE ONE WHO ORDERED ALL THE MEN OF A TINY, SPIT-IN-THE-OCEAN VILLAGE *MURDERED.*

IT'S A TOWN FULL OF *WIDOWS* AND *OLD PEOPLE*-- BUT THE LAND HAS *STRATEGIC VALUE* TO *QUANTUM.*

THOSE POOR PEOPLE'S ONE HOPE TO SURVIVE *GENOCIDE* WAS THE BARBARIAN MERCENARY *YOU* PEOPLE *LANDED ON.*

WHICH IS WHY YOU'RE HERE DEFENDING THE VILLAGE WHILE THE *MARTIAN MANHUNTER*-- *THE ONLY ONE OF YOU GUYS I RECOGNIZE*--

--CARRIES OUT THE BARBARIAN'S *MISSION.*

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO *KILL* THOSE MEN! WE COULD HAVE *STOPPED* THEM--

SURE--AND THEN HOP IN YOUR SPACE SHIP AND LEAVE. AND THEN THE SOLDIERS COME *BACK* AND WIPE OUT THE VILLAGE.

WAKE UP, KID, THAT'S NOT HOW THINGS WORK HERE IN *SKARTARIS.* YOU DON'T JUST KNOCK THESE GUYS OUT AND CALL THE COPS.

THERE *AREN'T* ANY COPS. THERE'S *NO LAW.*

THERE IS *STEEL.*

YOU KILL THEM --OR THEY WILL *CERTAINLY* KILL *YOU.* OH, AND SPEAKING OF WHICH--

POWW

TURN ON ME AGAIN AND I'LL SPLIT YOU FROM CLAVICLE TO CROWN.

THIS IS A WAR, KID,

A WAR NEEDS WARRIORS.

SIGN UP OR SHUT UP.

WAY TO GO, FIN-FACE--

GET OFF OF ME!!

YOU'RE *WITH* THAT LUNATIC! YOU *LIKE* HIM, DON'T YOU, TRIUMPH?

ALL THAT MACHO *MILITARY* CRAP MUST *APPEAL* TO YOUR SENSE OF *ORDER!*

I *DULLED* MY SWORD'S *BLADE,* RAY--

--USING MY *ELECTROMAGNETIC* POWERS. I DIDN'T WANT TO KILL ANYBODY.

ALL THIS--DEATH--SICKENS ME, BUT RAY, THIS ISN'T *OUR WORLD.* NOT OUR *PLACE* TO JUDGE.

AND HEY--DON'T ATTACK *ME* JUST BECAUSE *YOU* GOT SAND KICKED IN YOUR FACE.

I'M HUNGRY. YOU--?

NO PROBLEM.

HUFF--HUFF--HUFF--

YO--ONE ARMED DUDE--!

I'M NOT ABOUT TO ACCEPT *SLAUGHTER* OR SOME "*MAGIC SWORD OF USAF*" AS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THESE VILLAGERS.

--TELL ME WHERE I CAN FIND THIS GUY *QUANTUM*--!

THE SULTAN'S TREASURE ROOM AT TET-WERINGO.

HIS BORROWED SPACE SHIP CRASH-LANDED ON AN ALIEN WORLD, IN SO DOING KILLING THE CHAMPION OF A DOOMED RACE.

THE MARTIAN MAN-HUNTER KNOWS A LOT ABOUT DOOMED RACES. HIS SENSE OF LOGIC AND HONOR DEMANDED HE AT LEAST TRY TO MAKE AMENDS.

HIS LEGENDARY DETECTIVE SKILLS, HOWEVER, MAKE OTHER DEMANDS...

FASCINATING...

NEARBY...

MMEEEOOWWRRLLL--!!

HE'S THE KIND OF GUY WHO'LL FIND A WAY TO JUSTIFY THE *FUNKIEST* BEHAVIOR.

IT'S LIKE EVERY TIME I SAY, "OKAY, J'ONN--"

--I'M JUST *ASKING* FOR IT.

BETWEEN *HIS* POWERS, MY *CAMOUFLAGE ABILITY*, AND *YOUR* GUIDANCE, WE'VE *GOT* THE *LAST* OF THESE MAGIC DITTIES WE HAD TO ROUND UP.

STOP *COMPLAINING*, SHAKIRA--THE MANHUNTER WORKS ON *J'ONN TIME.*

THOUGH HOW THESE CHARMS WILL ACTIVATE SOME MAGIC "*SWORD OF USAF*" IS--

--MMFFPPPHH--!!

MAOOW!!

FWAPP

HEY-- HOT LIPS--!

YOU WANNA EAT THIS THING--?!

GYPSY--

YOU'RE LOITERING IN A DISREPUTABLE SECTOR-- DRESSED LIKE A CONCUBINE. SIMPLE ERROR.

<Eh, SHAKIRA --?!>

<MEOWW, HOLLAND. IT'S *BEEN* AWHILE.>

SOUNDS LIKE YOU TWO HAVE *MET.*

PUURRRR... IS THAT *JEALOUSY*, OR *CHAFE* FROM RUSTING *KNEE BOLTS*--?

AND HEY, ARE YOU A CAT WHO CAN BECOME *HUMAN*, OR A *HUMAN* WHO--

YES.

GYPSY--

--MY APOLOGIES FOR THE DELAY.

WE'VE ALL THE NECESSARY TALISMANS FOR EBALLUM TO CAST HIS SPELL. LET'S *GET* THEM TO HIM AND BE ON OUR WAY.

THERE ARE *FORCES* AT WORK HERE--

"--WHICH *WE* SHOULD NOT BE *INVOLVED* WITH."

A HUNDRED LEAGUES TO THE EAST.

HEY-- HEY, OLD GUY--

HAVE YOU SEEN *QUANTUM*--? YOU *HABLA ENGLISH-O* ?

YES, I SPEAK *MORGAN'S* TONGUE.

YOU ARE OBVIOUSLY HIS *SERVANT.*

I AM QUANTUM, DEMON. DO YOUR WORST.

NO, NO-- YOU'RE NOT FOLLOWING ME.

I'M LOOKING FOR QUANTUM-- THE *EVIL BAD* GUY.

I AM HE.

I *WELCOME* MY *DEATH.* IT IS MY *LEAST* REWARD FOR THE *DEATH* I HAVE BROUGHT MY PEOPLE.

THIS MAKES NO SENSE.

YOU'RE THE SCARY GUY WHO SENDS ARMIES TO KILL FARMERS--?!

THINGS, MY YOUNG MAN, ARE NEVER *QUITE* WHAT THEY *SEEM*--

THE FARMING VILLAGE OF VLANDAR...

STATUS REPORT, TRIUMPH.

ALL QUIET, J'ONN.

Y'KNOW, J'ONN--

--I NEVER SIGNED UP FOR THIS. I'M A *SKIP TRACER,* NOT ANYBODY'S DAMNED "*CHAMPION.*"

I WENT ALONG WITH THE "*MATCHING OUTFITS*" BIT, BUT WHEN DO WE--

SOON, GAMMERON, JUST AS SOON--

"--AS I GET THE *TRUTH.*"

I WAS A LITTLE *HARD* ON YOUR PEOPLE, MANHUNTER.

THIS IS A *HARD* WORLD.

MUCH HARDER THAN THE ONE *WE* LEFT, COLONEL MORGAN.

TRAVIS, MANHUNTER. THE *CENTER* OF THE *EARTH* IS NO PLACE FOR USELESS FORMALITY.

I HAVE *HEARD* OF THIS PLACE--*SKARTARIS,* THE WORLD OF PERPETUAL SUNLIGHT. A COLLEAGUE ONCE VISITED HERE.*

*NAMELY POWER GIRL, IN WARLORD #122--CONSULTIN' BOB

I SEVERELY *DOUBT,* HOWEVER, THAT SKARTARIS EXISTS AT EARTH'S CENTER. I BELIEVE WE HAVE TRAVERSED A *DIMENSIONAL VEIL*--

--ONE OF *SEVERAL* LINKING SKARTARIS TO EARTH.

FINE, WHATEVER.

ALL I KNOW IS, ON JUNE 16, 1969 Lt. COLONEL TRAVIS MORGAN LOST HIS FUEL OVER THE *ARCTIC CIRCLE,* AND CRASH-LANDED *HERE.***

MAYBE I FLEW THROUGH SOME "*GATEWAY.*" DOESN'T MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE. *YOU* WANT TO GET *HOME*--

--AND YOU THINK I KNOW *THE WAY.*

**FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #8--Roo & Bob

PERHAPS WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER GET HOME.

I AM HOME.

I *BELONG* HERE. I'M ONE OF *THEM,* NOW...

MEANWHILE...

HERE ARE MY PEOPLE--WHAT *REMAINS* OF THEM.

WE'VE HAD TO PUT OUR EVERY RESOURCE INTO THE *MILITARY* --HOPING TO RETAKE THE LAND WE WERE *FORCED* OFF BY THE VLANDAR.

FORCED --?

THE VALLEY IS *OURS* BY HERITAGE AND *DIVINE SELECTION.* THOUGH THE VLANDAR CLAIM TO BE MERE PEASANT FARMERS--

--THEY ARE *GREAT* IN NUMBER--HIDING IN THE *HILLS.* OUR OWN MILITARY EXPANSION WAS A DESPERATE *RESPONSE* TO THEIR *AGGRESSION.*

WHAT AM I GETTING MYSELF INTO--

--WHA--?!

HEY--HEY--I CAN'T--

YOU *MUST.*

THE WOMAN IS MAKING A *WAR SACRIFICE.* THE CHILD'S FATHER WAS *KILLED* BY THE ATTACKERS.

TO REFUSE SUCH AN OFFERING WOULD *SHAME* THE MOTHER.

BLESS IT AND OFFER THE BABY--AS A *GIFT* TO ITS MOTHER.

UNNGA-BUNNGA! YOU'RE BLESSED!

WOW. NEVER BLESSED ANYBODY BEFORE. COOL.

"--*TECHNOLOGY,* J'ONN. THAT'S WHY WE'RE BOTH HERE. YOU SEE--"

USUALLY ONLY THE *RICH* AND *POWERFUL*-- THE WARRIOR ELITE--OR THE MOST--SKILLED-- WIZARDS--

--SORRY. BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I USED *ENGLISH*.

YOU'RE DOING FINE.

--THE ANCIENT ATLANTEANS--AT LEAST THOSE OF *THIS* DIMENSION-- WERE *WIPED OUT* BY WAR. THEIR HIGHLY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY SURVIVED--THEIR RACE DIDN'T.

TECHNOLOGY HERE AMONG THIS PRIMITIVE CIVILIZATION IS A *STATUS* SYMBOL, MORE VALUABLE THAN *GOLD*.

THING IS, NOT EVERYONE IS USING THIS TECH STUFF *WISELY*. LIKE *QUANTUM*.

YOU REALIZE, OF COURSE--HE *BROUGHT* YOU HERE.

YES. WHAT I DO NOT YET KNOW IS--

--WHY.

EXCUSE ME, J'ONN--

--ANYBODY SEE *RAY*?

I WILL ASSUME HE IS *MISSING*.

GONE OFF IN A HUFF HOURS AGO,

OUR COMM LOCATOR IS USELESS HERE ON ALIEN TERRAIN--

"L-RAY COULD BE *ANYWHERE*."

THE VLANDAR, AIDED BY THE WARLORD *MORGAN*, HAVE CRAFTED A *GREAT* AND *TERRIBLE* WEAPON.

AN ELDRITCH TOOL OF MASS DESTRUCTION.

THE BASTARDS.

THIS TOOL IS THE DEADLY *SWORD OF USAF.*

NOW THAT THE WIZARD EBALLUM HAS THE NECESSARY TOTEMS, HE CAN *ACTIVATE* THE SWORD'S EVIL.

IF DEPLOYED AGAINST US--THE SWORD OF USAF SHALL SLAY THE ENTIRETY OF MY PEOPLE.

INCLUDING *THE CHILD.*

INCLUDING THE BABY.

INCLUDING *YOUR* BABY.

INCLUDING *MY* BABY.

CLEARLY, RAY, SOMETHING MUST BE DONE.

CLEARLY--THE *INNOCENT*--

"--NEED A *CHAMPION.*"

J'ONN--WHAT ABOUT RAY--?

THERE ARE SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES, TRIUMPH. *PROMINENT* AMONG THEM--

-- RAY IS BLOWING OFF STEAM,

I THINK HE'S GONE AFTER THE *BAD GUYS.*

WHICH IS *ANOTHER* POSSIBILITY.

AS SOON AS EBALLUM COMPLETES HIS *SPELL*-- ACTIVATES THE *ENCHANTMENT* HE BELIEVES WILL PROTECT HIS VILLAGE--

--OUR MISSION WILL BE COMPLETE.

IN THAT CASE, WHY DON'T I HELP EBALLUM *COOK.*

HOPE RAY HASN'T GONE AFTER *QUANTUM*--

--HE'S AN *OILY* SNAKE.

ALTHOUGH QUANTUM *IS* OBVIOUS-- AND YOUR GUYS SEEM SHARP ENOUGH.

YOU WANTED *ANSWERS,* MANHUNTER? THEY'RE *DOWN HERE*--

--IN THIS *UNDERGROUND STORAGE FACILITY.*

IT'S *LOADED* WITH *SOFTWARE* STORED IN THESE CABINETS. ANY SKARTARAN TECHNO-WIZARD WOULD SELL HIS *SOUL* FOR THIS LIBRARY.

OR *SLAUGHTER* A VILLAGE.

THIS IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT.

THESE POOR *FARMERS* DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT'S *DOWN* HERE.

YOU SAID QUANTUM WAS *OBVIOUS*--?

YEAH-- REAL CLUMSY-- LIKE A USED CAR SALESMAN.

FOR INSTANCE-- HE'S GOT THIS OLD SCAM WHERE HE APPEARS AS A *HELPLESS PEASANT*-- GETS SOME WOMAN TO "*GIVE*" YOU HER "*BABY*"--

SO, YOU'RE *EBALLUM*--THE WIZARD. AND YOU CAST YOUR SPELLS ON A PC.

FEH, IT'S A LIVING.

AND-- YOU SPEAK *ENGLISH* --?

IT'S A *WIZARD* THING. LOOK HERE, KID--THAT A *SIX*?

NO, IT'S A *NINE*.

FEH. *THAT'S* WHY I CAN'T GET THIS STUPID THING WORKING.

CH-KLAAACKK!

WELL, WHADDAYA KNOW.

"USAF"--OF COURSE--

TED STA
AIR FORC

FFWWWARR-OOMM

AND--

--THIS JUST IN--

--RAY--

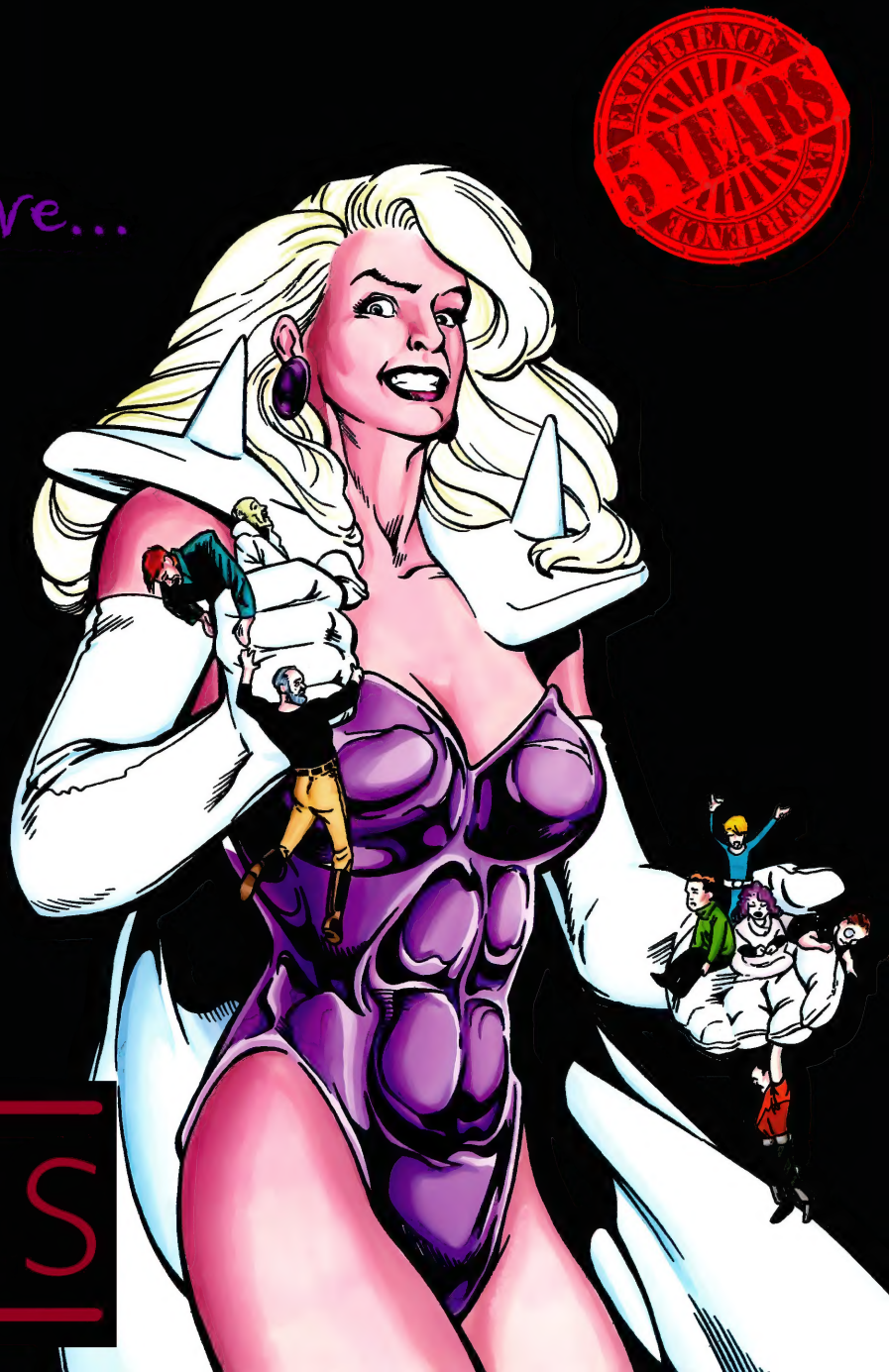
<AND NOW, DEFILERS--> <--DIE AT MY HANDS--!!>

next:

GODWAR!

OH MY, BUT WE'VE MADE A MESS OF THINGS...

From Baaldur, with love...



GLORITH

novus